

The Unknown by Hauptbahnhof

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Summary: The first of a three part series. The government hasn't heard anything from the Hawkins lab for a while so a top secret organization dispatches an agent to figure out what happened. Focuses on an OC and is mainly a setup for a longer story I want to write. Takes place after the first season. Beware, possible spoilers ahead.

1. Chapter 1: The Agent

A/N: This story focuses on an original character and the entire thing serves as a setup for a sequel that I want to write. It was originally imagined as a Doctor Who crossover, so it is fun to imagine Peter Carter (OC) with the personality of the tenth Doctor. Actual characters from the show really only start to show up in the later chapters, but they will be center stage in the sequel (the story I actually wanted to write).

I don't own Stranger Things or any of the characters from the show. I don't know why I have to say that, but everyone else on the site does.

Please review and criticize, just please don't be mean. Enjoy.

There was a report from the Hawkins lab that something bad had happened, then nothing. Because of the nature of some of the work they were carrying out there, they were supposed to report regularly to the American government and a couple of other involved organizations. They had received a report that something had gone wrong, they stopped receiving reports all together. People tried to get in to figure out what happened, but the lab had shut its doors completely. A couple of the involved organizations were worried about them and began to observe the lab from afar using various equipment ranging all the way from cameras to Geiger counters. The readings they got were so strange that at first they thought their equipment was broken, but once a couple of teams compared results, they decided that either their equipment was all broken in exactly the same way, or that the unbelievable results they got from spying on the lab were actually correct. The results made their way through analysts of every agency that was interested in the experiments happening in the unremarkable Indiana town and they all eventually agreed that they had absolutely no idea what was going on. They readings and what little analysis they could agree on was collected and passed on to more and more secret agencies until they got to the most secret of all

The Coalition was a top secret project started by NATO in the mid 1950's. Its job was to facilitate sharing of information across the various secret agencies of the world. The idea was that if they all

knew what everyone else knew that they could better protect themselves against the possibility of Soviet attack. It was supposed to be just a data center and a bunch of analysts that passed intel from one intelligence agency on to whichever one had jurisdiction on an issue so they could best deal with it. After a little while though, they realized that there were some things that absolutely nobody had jurisdiction over under the system they had. There were some problems that were either too far reaching or too unfamiliar for any one of the existing organizations to take control of it. It was then decided that The Coalition should take command in these situations with the full resources of all the agencies around them and a surprising amount of other resources at their disposal. All the issues that stretched too far for any one organization and any problems that nobody could understand were sent to this most secret of secret agencies. They weren't like any of their secret counterparts though. They did not employ the emotionless men in sunglasses that the CIA was known for. The Coalition decided from the beginning that they were going to take a completely different approach to solving their cases. They hired the creative types, the people that could see a different perspective than everyone else. They believed that the world's engineers and scientists made the best secret agents, not the strong, fast types that were hired by other agencies.

The data from the Hawkins National Laboratory made it to The Coalition and they, like everyone before them, couldn't make much out of just the numbers on the pages. They knew they needed the human element of the story, so they sent an agent out to see what actually happened in Hawkins.

It was almost 11:00 PM on January 1, 1984 when Peter Carter finally made it to the only hotel in the small town. He had been paged at about one AM when he was just about to leave the New Year's party he was at. He received a briefing at the Coalition headquarters in New York on all the (minimal) information that they had. He was given a briefcase with all the data they got from the other organizations and then started on the 12 hour drive to Hawkins. He checked into the inn with the very polite lady at the front desk and then headed up to his room with the briefcase and his duffel bag with his clothes and toiletries. Most people in his situation would have collapsed onto the queen bed and passed out immediately, but Peter

Carter was not "most people". He was a scientist by education and loved figuring out what was happening in a strange situation that nobody could figure out, and this was the strangest he had ever seen. He hadn't slept since a short nap before his New Year's party the previous day, but he was much too excited to sleep and instead sat on the bed pouring over all the papers he had in the briefcase until he finally dozed off a little after 2 AM./p

2. Chapter 2: The News

Agent Carter was startled awake by the alarm clock next to his bed at exactly 7:00 in the morning. It took him a moment to remember where he was, but when he did, he was jolted by the excitement he felt the previous night. He showered as quickly as he could, put on his suit, then almost forgot his car keys on the way out the door. He had to be at the lab at 9:00, so he had about an hour to kill before he left. The diner across the street from the hotel seemed like a good place for breakfast. As soon as he got there, Carter picked up a local newspaper from the small rack next to the counter, and took a seat on a stool. The waitress came over to him almost immediately and handed him a menu.

"Welcome to Hawkins. You're not from around here, are you?" she asked him as he started looking over the breakfast options.

"What makes you say that?" He asked.

"I've lived here my whole life and know pretty much everyone in this town. Most of the people in here right now are regulars, and I have never seen you in my life."

"Ok. You got me. I'm an outsider. I'm new here."

"Well, once again, welcome to Hawkins. Can I get you anything to start with?"

"Just a coffee for now, I need another moment to figure out what I'm going to eat."

"Alright then, by the way, my name's Jenny if you need anything." Jenny promptly got a cup of coffee for him as he looked over the menu. He decided on some blueberry pancakes and a biscuit then turned his attention to the newspaper. After about four years of working for The Coalition, Agent Carter learned that one of the best resources for investigating local strangeness is a newspaper. The local papers will report just about anything and The Hawkins Gazette was no exception. He read through every story about old people's birthdays, public works mishaps, and other small town happenings

for any small detail about what he was there for, but he found nothing.

"You seem pretty interested in that paper." Jenny remarked, startling Carter a little bit as she handed him a big plate of breakfast.

"I want to know a little bit about the town, I got here yesterday knowing nothing except that it's called Hawkins." The agent replied after gathering himself again. "You hear any interesting stories from around town recently?" The paper was a good resource for getting some background, but he always knew that the people were the best.

"Well... I suppose that the biggest story around town would be 'The Boy Who Came Back to Life'." Jenny replied, saying the title like a magician setting up a trick.

"What happened there?" asked Carter, intrigued by the mysterious sounding topic, but mostly expecting it to be more small-town-nonsense.

"Well, about a month and a half ago, little Will Byers went missing. There were search parties and everything, and a couple days later, they found a body they thought was his in the quarry lake. They had a funeral and everything, but a couple of days later, he showed up out of the blue! He had to spend a couple of days in the hospital, but as far as I know, he's good as new now." Agent Carter was surprised to hear this. Making a fake body to stop people from looking into a matter further so the proper (usually secret) authorities could look into it was not unheard of in his line of work, but only used when they were sure that the real body would never be found. This sounded to him like a case of agency carelessness, but why he hadn't heard about it in his briefing was what intrigued him the most. He continued talking to Jenny for a little longer, but got nothing else helpful out of her. When he was done, he thanked her for the food and conversation, and left.

3. Chapter 3: The Lab

After his breakfast, Agent Carter went back to the hotel parking lot and got in his car. His car was a piece of pride for him. It was a BMW 325i that he had bought about four months ago. Secret agents don't usually buy their own cars, they usually get them from the agency, but Carter really wanted this and worked to get himself his nice German luxury sedan. He started it up and reversed out of the small street-side parking lot. He was just about to put it in first gear when he noticed the street lamp. It was wavering intensity, but was pretty bright despite the fact that there was plenty of sunlight. The lamp went out and Carter decided it was nothing.

About ten minutes later, he arrived at the gate to Hawkins National Lab, showed his badge and got in. He parked by the main entrance and just as he was pulling the parking brake, a small, balding man came out of the front door and proceeded to the agent's car. Agent Carter extended his hand and the small man took it for a short and seemingly urgent handshake.

"Dr. Brenner, I presume." Agent Carter said to the man.

"What?" The man asked, looking confused. "You didn't hear? Brenner died about a month ago, I'm Dr. Stevens. I'm in charge for the time being." Carter found himself surprised for the same reason the second time that day. This was another important-sounding fact that didn't make it into the meager briefing he got.

"What exactly happened to Dr. Brenner?"

"That's something we ourselves are still trying to figure out. Probably best if we head inside." Dr. Stevens waved his hand and beckoned the agent before him towards the door. They navigated the small maze of hallways to a medium-large office overfilled with papers. "Sorry about the mess. There's quite a bit to get through right now."

"What do you mean by that?"

"There's been a bunch of strange things happening around here." Dr. Stevens said as he plopped himself down in the chair behind the

desk. Agent Carter, more confused than ever, took the seat opposite him. "I was working here when Brenner got this job, and he didn't have to deal with this shit. He got a nice smooth transition about fifteen years ago, there was a ceremony and everything when Dr. Tyler stepped down as head of the lab. I've just had to deal with figuring out what happened to Brenner and pretty much the whole security staff."

"What happened?" Carter asked. Never having heard anything about the security team.

"Brenner and a bunch of the lab's security guys were found dead at a school in town about a month and a half ago. There was a lot of blood but not a lot of answers." 'A month and a half ago' Carter thought to himself. 'That's about the same time as the 'Boy Who Came Back to Life' story'.

"Where are the bodies now? Can I examine them?" Agent Carter wasn't a doctor, but he learned in his Coalition training what to look for in an autopsy. Things that the normal people wouldn't check for.

"That's the thing..." Dr. Stevens continued, leaning in a little bit. "The bodies all disappeared pretty much right after it all happened. As well as pretty much all of the lab's documents for that week, and the documentation for whatever project Dr. Brenner was working on himself. Here's everything we were able to figure out so far..." Both men at this point settled back in their chairs a little bit. "Dr. Brenner was working on some project in the basement for the past fourteen years, pretty much since he started as director here. All of the documentation from said project is completely gone except for the paperwork to declare the entire bottom three levels of the facility as bio hazard risks. I'm sure we could figure out more if we knew what was down there, but given the circumstances, I'm not willing to send anyone down there until we know a little more."

"I understand completely." Carter replied, standing up from his chair. Dr. Stevens followed suit and stood up from his chair as well. They shook hands one more time as they started to head out. "Let me know as soon as you know anything more."

4. Chapter 4: The Boy Who Came Back to Life

Agent Carter went back to the hotel and began to write down everything he knew. After looking over what he had, he decided it was time to investigate "The Boy Who Came Back to Life". A trip to the local library got him the news article that Jenny was talking about in the diner, but that didn't tell him much more than she already had. Since the boy in question was a middle school student and it was only about noon, Agent Carter decided it was safe to assume that he was in school. He got the boy's address, then went back to the hotel for a nap. He set the alarm clock for 3 PM and let the lack of sleep from the preceding days take him over.

When the alarm went off, he woke up feeling a little bit groggy, but after about five minutes he felt refreshed and ready to go. He got out a map of the town and found where the address was. In about five minutes, he found himself parking in front of a small, lonely house. There were no neighbors that he could see, just forest. After knocking on the door, he was greeted by a middle aged woman with brown hair.

"Hello, you must be Joyce Byers." He said, quoting the name of the boy's mother he read in the newspaper article. He pulled out his badge and continued "My name is Peter Carter and I am an agent with..." he stopped talking when he saw how quickly the welcoming expression on her face changed to one of dread. "Is something wrong, Ms. Byers?"

"Maybe. The last time I dealt with government agents it didn't go too well."

"I'm actually here investigating those agents, I think. We know just about nothing about what happened at the Hawkins National Lab the week your son disappeared, and we just want to know what did happen." He noticed a little bit of the dread leave her face and then he heard a sound coming from outside. He turned to see a kid on a bike heading towards the house. The boy was defiantly Will Byers, Agent Carter recognized him from the newspaper article. Will looked a little nervous when he saw a man in a suit talking to his mother after the stories he heard about what had happened while he was

missing. Carter extended his hand towards Will as he came to the door. "Hello, I am assuming you are Will Byers." Agent Carter tried to be as warm as he could towards the boy, but he looked as pale as a ghost and looked nervously at his mother. He eventually just ran into the house and into one of the rooms off the hall without saying a word.

"I'm so sorry about that. He's just nervous." Joyce explained to the agent.

"I understand as much as I can with the information I have, but I am assuming that I will have a much more three-dimensional understanding when I hear what actually happened." He replied. Joyce had to think a moment about this.

"I'm not going to tell you anything right now, to get the whole story, I need to talk to some other people first. Come back tonight at 8 tonight, then we might tell you the story." Agent Carter was much too curious at this point and wanted to protest and ask for something immediately, but he figured he had a good lead and that he shouldn't spoil it.

"Thank you for your time, Ms. Byers." was all he said before turning around, getting in his car, and driving away.

5. Chapter 5: The Empty Chair

At 8 o'clock sharp, Agent Carter pulled up at the Byers' residence once again, but noticed a couple more cars there. There were a couple of small sedans, but what really caught his eye was a big Chevy SUV that said it belonged to the Hawkins Police Sheriff. Did Joyce call the police on him? Did she think he was some kind of stalker or something? These thoughts kept rattling around in his head as he went up and knocked on the door. Joyce Byers opened it once again, she didn't have a look of dread on her face, but she also didn't look as welcoming as she did the first time she opened the door for him. She led him to the kitchen table, where a good sized group of other people were sitting, a surprising number of them kids. The one thing that the agent noticed though was not the expressions of doubt that everyone had on their faces, it was the one empty chair next to one of the kids. He didn't know why that should be remarkable to him, but it simply was.

"We've debated for the better part of the afternoon whether or not to tell you this story, and we agreed to, but we have to know a little bit more about you first." A man at the table said. He was wearing a tan shirt and a police badge. Carter assumed the SUV outside belonged to him. Their terms seemed reasonable to Agent Carter, not to mention that he was curious enough at this point to give them pretty much anything in exchange for the chance to hear their story. He spent the next twenty minutes breaking just about every confidentiality rule he had ever been taught by his employer in order to gain the trust of the people around him. He told them about the nature of The Coalition and the work that they did. He told them that he was not like any other secret agents, that he majored in theoretical physics and minored in engineering in college, not in criminology. Lastly, he told them about his trip to the lab, and the disturbing amount of cover-up that seemed to be happening there. When he was done, he was met with a dull silence in the room as everyone else tried to absorb everything they just learned about the man who was no longer a stranger. About thirty seconds later, they all started to exchange looks and nods, Agent Carter could tell that they had come to some sort of agreement. The chief was the first to break the silence;

"If anyone objects, please say so, but I think we are comfortable with you knowing the truth." He paused for a moment, as if to allow time for anyone to object, then he continued; "We know enough about you, time you know us." Everyone went around the table and introduced themselves. Sitting closest to Agent Carter was the police chief who introduced himself as Jim Hopper. Next to him was Joyce Byers and a teenager who was apparently her son named Jonathan. Then came the group of kids who were Will (as Agent Carter already knew), Lucas, Dustin, and Mike. The last two at the table were two more teenagers, Nancy and Steve. After all the introductions were made, and the personal connections between everyone were established (Nancy was Mike's sister for example), they began what would be the most interesting hour and a half of Peter Carter's life. They began by asking him to please have an open mind about everything he was about to hear, something he had always been told at The Coalition. He needed an open mind for every case he had been on, but never had he had to try to accept so many fantastic tales at once. The story was choppy and unrehearsed, it was obvious that they had never told anybody outside the group what actually happened. There were a lot of puzzle pieces that they tried to fit together as they were going through the events, but they eventually got a cohesive explanation out. The monster and the Upside Down were amazing, but what interested Carter the most was the story of Eleven. She was first mentioned pretty early on and he immediately wondered why she was not at the table with them, but he didn't dare interrupt. By the end, he felt heartbroken when he learned what happened to her.

They finished at about 10:00 PM and then it was Peter's turn to sit silently and absorb what he had heard. After a moment, he stood up, thanked them for the trust they had put in him and left the house. The last thing he remembered seeing of the people who had just trusted him with their deepest secret was the small boy Mike, he looked on the verge of tears as they got to the end of the story and he told about how Eleven defeated the monster. Seeing that struck a chord with the agent.

Agent Carter got in to his car and began the short drive back to the hotel while he tried to organize his thoughts. As far as the agency cared, his work was done. He had figured out what had happened at

the lab, why the reports stopped coming in, and what they were hiding there. He would go back to the lab in the morning and explain his findings to Dr. Stevens, they would work together to use the results in the briefcase he got to piece together exactly what was going on under the lab and how they could clean up after it. The gray BMW pulled into the small parking lot in front of the hotel and Carter quietly went upstairs. He gingerly grabbed the radio he used to communicate with the Coalition headquarters in New York and pressed the button to get someone in the office on the line. He was all ready to tell them that he was done and that he was about to start on his report, but he didn't feel done, the only thought in his mind was about the one empty chair at the meeting he had. When someone did come in on the radio from the headquarters, he didn't tell them anything that he had figured out, instead he made a somewhat strange request.

6. Chapter 6: The Research

The Coalition was known for doing pretty much everything differently from most secret agencies. For example, when a field agent asks for a bunch of information while they are on assignment, the request doesn't go through multiple redundant layers of bureaucracy to determine if the agent actually needed what they requested, The Coalition simply gave their agents what they asked for, no questions asked. Agent Carter was always amazed by the speed that his employer could fulfill strange requests, but nothing surprised him more than coming downstairs to the hotel lobby the next morning to find that a package had arrived for him. He was on his way out to breakfast, but once he saw that his request had arrived, he was no longer hungry, breakfast could wait. The polite lady at the front desk struggled to lift the somewhat small but nonetheless heavy box. She set it down on the desk, the agent thanked her, then rushed it back up to his room. There was a lot in it, but his level of excitement meant that he almost didn't feel the weight. He was so excited that he forgot that the door to his hotel room was locked and he ran face-first into it with a somewhat loud smack before he, slightly embarrassed, got out his room key.

Once inside, he opened the box, careful not to damage its contents, then removed all the stacks of papers inside. There were about four times more papers in the box than he thought there would be, but he dove right in despite that. For the next couple of hours, he spent his time carefully looking at graphs and charts, going a little slower than he knew he could because he was afraid to miss something. He didn't notice the clock ticking away or the growing hunger until his alarm clock rang and startled him. It was 3:00 PM, he had forgotten to turn off his alarm from yesterday. Even though he wasn't expecting to be disturbed, he was glad that the loud beeping took him out of the trance he had gone into. He took a moment to go back over everything in his head, once he was confident that the data he found supported his hypothesis, he gathered up a couple of relevant papers and literally ran out the door.

He ran out of the hotel and didn't stop running until he reached the police station. When he barged through the door, out of breath, the

lady at the desk looked a little scared for him.

"Are you OK, sir?" She asked. Carter realized at this point how it looked, he had just ran into the police station out of breath, she probably thought he was being chased and needed the police's help.

"I'm fine." the agent started, trying to catch enough breath to get to his next sentence. "I just need to talk to the chief."

"The chief is out right now, you'll have to wait for him to..." she stopped talking all of a sudden as they both heard the door open behind them. The large figure of the chief came through and he looked surprised to see the mysterious secret agent standing in the middle of the station, out of breath and holding a bunch of papers.

"Is something wrong?" He asked, looking more confused than anything.

"I need to speak with you, privately." Carter said in between breaths.

"You can come into my office, but we are going to get you some water first." Hopper said, with a little bit of concern on his face.

They stopped at the water cooler on the way to Chief Hopper's office and Carter drank way more than the chief thought was possible. They eventually made it to the small office at the back of the building and Agent Carter immediately plopped down on the chair in front of the desk. The chief remained standing for a moment and went over to the small coffee machine at the side of the room.

"I'm having some coffee. This is probably a stupid question considering how much you just drank, but do you want some?" Hopper asked, more trying to be polite than actually expecting Carter to say yes.

"No thanks, with the amount of adrenaline in my veins right now, caffeine might just kill me." Carter replied, only half kidding.

"So, why are you so..." he paused looking for the right word to describe the exhausted agent; "distraught?"

"I got a bunch of information from the week that the monster was

here, the results from anything recording electromagnetic data made it to me. Look at these." He pointed at a couple of papers, some peaks in the graphs that he has circled. Once he got a bunch of the papers out in a grid on the desk, he started to explain them. "Each row of papers is a different facility in the area that took these measurements, and each column is a different point in time during the week. Is there anything you notice?"

"Honestly, no. I just see a bunch of lines I don't understand."

"Well, if you look at all these lines, they are all about the same shape at the same points in time. For the monster to travel between dimensions without using 'the gate', it would have to use a ridiculously big amount of energy, and we would be able to see that. Each of these peaks in radiation..." he said pointing to a couple of selected graphs "can be associated with a disappearance attributed to the monster, and all these smaller peaks..." he said, pointing at the others "can be interpreted as the monster traveling alone. Now, this one all the way on the end looks about the same, right?"

"I guess. What's that?"

"This is from when Eleven defeated the monster, and if you ask me, it looks like the energy signature from when the monster brought someone with it to the Upside Down." The chief tried to comprehend what he had just been told, a moment later, he thought he understood what the agent had tried to say.

"Does that mean what I think it means?" He asked, the confusion in his voice mainly replaced by hope.

"I don't know, but I think we need to investigate."

7. Chapter 7: The Gate

The two agreed to take Carter's car, as it would draw less attention than the chief's giant SUV. They drove in relative silence to the building that everything seemed to revolve around; the Hawkins National Laboratory. After showing his badge a couple of times, the two men were admitted on the condition that they remain with Dr. Stevens.

"So, did you figure out what happened?" the small Dr. Stevens asked Agent Carter while trying to keep up with the men he had just allowed into the facility.

"Yes, but there is no time to explain now. We need to get into the bio hazard area."

"What!? Are you crazy? We have no idea what's down there!"

"We know one thing that might be down there." Chief Hopper interjected; "A lost little girl. We're going to try to bring her back home." Dr. Stevens didn't say anything more after he heard that, he just followed the other two with a dumbfounded look on his face. They eventually made it to the beginning of the hazard zone, Stevens started to complain that they should have more people with them, for protection. Carter and Hopper looked at each other and they could see in each other's faces that they each thought the fewer people that knew about what was below the lab, the better. So it was agreed that Stevens should be ignored. Dr. Stevens started to put on a white hazmat suit while Hopper and Carter got to some of the more substantial, yellow suits. Carter and Hopper took some guns off a rack on the wall. Carter was never a big fan of firearms, but Hopper insisted that they were a nesscessary protection because they had no idea what exactly they were getting into. Once they were adequately protected, they proceeded down the hall to the elevator. Once inside the small room, Agent Carter looked to his companions. Hopper looked a little anxious, but composed nonetheless, he was the only one with actual experience in the Upside Down. Dr. Stevens looked like he was about to throw up in his suit, but was acutely aware of what that would actually mean for him.

The door opened to a dark hallway and they flipped on the flashlights they had. After some corners, they got to the room with the gate.

"That looks different than the last time I was here." Hopper said, confused again.

"I was slightly worried about this." Carter replied without taking his eyes off the mysterious gate.

"Worried about what?" Hopper asked.

"Without the monster here to support that little pocket-dimension it had, the whole thing is collapsing and it will eventually be gone. In the end, that will be a good thing, but I just hope we made it in time." Nobody said anything at this point. Hopper and Carter didn't want to think about the possibility that they were too late and Dr. Stevens didn't say anything probably because he was trying his best not to faint out of fear for what might come out. Stevens was at this point directed to go to the small room in the wall behind the glass, and even though it was only about ten feet further from the gate, he practically ran to get a little bit further from it. Once he got situated in his little control room, the other two timidly proceeded towards the gate.

Once inside, they found a dirty, frightening projection of the town above them.

"Do you have any idea where she might be?" Carter asked, surprised to see his partner was more frightened than he expected.

"I have a couple of ideas, but it doesn't look like we have much time." A quick look around the area revealed that everything was coming apart.

"It looks like everything is collapsing fast. You're right. We need to be quick." They started at a medium jog through the foreign universe, careful to not trip on any of the debris that dominated the landscape. They made it to the familiar enough looking town square and proceeded through into the neighborhood.

"If I had to guess where she was, this is where I would bet." Hopper

said as they came upon a medium large, pretty unremarkable house. "That week that the monster was terrorizing the town, she lived in the basement here."

"This is the Wheelers' house?"

"Yep." The two got to the basement door around back and were able to force it open. Once inside, they saw a little movement under a table on one of the walls. Further examination revealed that it was a blanket fort, and once Hopper pulled off the top blanket in the fort, they saw a small little girl. She looked pretty weak. One would after spending so much time in the Upside Down. All she was able to do was open her eyes a little and whisper;

"Chief?"

"Yes. I'm here for you. I brought a new friend and we are going to get you out of here." The little girl smiled and then fainted into a peaceful sleep, a luxury she wasn't able to really enjoy for most of her life. Hopper scooped her up into his arms and carried her out the door and towards the gate.

"Um, Chief..." Carter said, pointing behind them at some dark clouds that were quickly rushing in and swallowing the world behind them. "We might want to go a little bit faster." The two immediately broke into the fastest sprint they could.

8. Chapter 8: The Return

The white pants of Dr. Stevens' hazmat suit did not remain white when the three people burst suddenly back through the gate. After giving the laundry crews one of their worst nightmares, the lab director promptly fainted. The gate collapsed in on itself and disappeared pretty immediately once they got back to the real world. Hopper and Carter couldn't see Dr. Stevens when they arrived, but some searching found him passed out behind the big control panel, they had a small laugh about it, and Carter offered to carry him back up to the lab because Hopper had carried Eleven all the way through the Upside Down and it didn't look like he was willing to let her go any time soon. Because the portly doctor was much heavier than the gaunt child, Agent Carter wasn't really able to carry him to the elevator, so he had to resort to inelegantly dragging him there instead. Once they got back up to surface level, some guards helped carry Stevens away.

About eight hours later, Eleven slowly regained consciousness in an unfamiliar bed. The first thing she noticed was the harsh lighting of the room, then she noticed the hospital gown. She started to scream, but stopped once the chief came to quiet her and tell her it was all right.

"I tried to tell them not to put you in that damn gown, but they insisted they had to. Hospital rules." Eleven was able to calm down a little bit and figure out a little more about where she was. She looked around at the pretty flowers on the small table next to her bed, with a bunch of balloons and cards next to them. Then she noticed Agent Carter.

"New friend." was all she could say, a smile coming over her as she did.

"Yes." Carter said. "You're safe now and my work here is done. My organization will be working with you in the coming weeks to get you officially registered as a person so you can begin your normal life. You've been through a lot, I think a normal life is what you deserve right now." The chief nodded a little at this and Agent Carter nodded back. "Well... It's about time for me to be going."

"Where?" asked Eleven, a little sad that her new friend had to go so soon.

"I have to head back to my job, I have to go to some more people to help. Maybe we'll meet again some day, under better circumstances." Carter opened the door and started to leave, but when he saw what was outside, he turned back to the girl on the bed and said; "In the meantime, it looks like you have some enthusiastic visitors." Four boys ran right past the secret agent and straight to Eleven's bedside. One of them, Mike, looked like he was about 90% sure he was in a dream. Carter smiled as he got one last look at the happiness that he was leaving behind, that he had some hand in creating. The unknown was always the most interesting part of his job, figuring out things that nobody could, but the humanity was always the best part.

The next day, Agent Carter arrived at The Coalition's headquarters in Manhattan promptly at 8:00 AM. As soon as the elevator door opened for him, he was greeted with the familiar bustle of everyone trying to keep the world from exploding. He made his way to the desk at the far end of the room a little more slowly than usual, taking in everything about his job that he had come to love. A couple people said "hi" to him and he smiled and said "hi" back to them, but most just ignored him, concentrating on their serious work. Eventually, Carter made it to his desk and settled in to try to explain the strangest and most interesting few days of his life in words.

A/N: That's it! My first fanfic! Please let me know what you think about it because I will be writing a sequel shortly. To be completely honest, the story in the sequel is the story I actually wanted to tell, but I needed to write some sort of introduction to set up for it. The introduction became pretty long and I decided that it deserved to be its own story. I know that this story focused a lot (probably too much) on the OC, but the next part will be mainly about the characters from the show

Thank you for reading! Please review if you feel like it. Even though I've been finished with this story for a while, I still read and appreciate everything you write.

Update: The story continues in my second fanfic: A Not-So-Normal

Life.